

Rockville Environment Commission

Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, March 10, 2009

At the Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue

Attendance

Commissioners: Faith Klareich, Kris Dighe, David Davis, Christine Davidson-McCord, Beri Kravitz, Dominique Lorang-Leins and Tolu Odunlami

Guests: Mark Charles, City of Rockville; Anne Goodman (City Volunteers), Julie Palakovich-Carr (Resident)

Meeting Commencement

The meeting was convened at 7:30 in the Diamondback Terrapin Conference Room of City Hall.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 10, 2009 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved (motion by Dighe, second by Davidson-McCord).

Backyard Habitat

Anne Goodman briefed the Commission on her work in developing a backyard habitat program, including seeking program certification from the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). She described the resources available to residents and what the City was doing to assist interested homeowners, including holding workshops and participation at City festivals. We also intend to post information on the City's website. Ms. Goodman also explained the process of obtaining NWF certification. After a brief question and answer session, the sense of the room was support for the program. City staff may propose a specific role for the Commission or seek an endorsement at a future meeting.

Environmental Management Report by Mark Charles

Use of Conference Calls

Both the Commission and its committees may meet on conference calls and submit or receive comment on matters via email. However, no vote or final action should be taken outside of a face-to-face meeting. This does not prevent individual Commissioners from participating in regularly scheduled meetings via conference call.

Earth Day Activities

Charles discussed the variety of activities occurring from now through the end of April

Montgomery County Stormwater Permit

The Maryland Department of the Environment recently issued the NPDES permit for Montgomery County. This permit will likely serve as a template for the Rockville permit expected later this spring.

Stormwater Staff Recruitment

Charles discussed the status of several new stormwater positions that the City is in the process of filling.

Federal Stimulus Opportunities

Charles briefly discussed the stimulus opportunities that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act may offer. Lorang-Leins, Davidson-McCord and Odunlami offered to help if the process allows.

Rockville Science Day and Hometown Holidays (11-5 pm)

The Commission plans to participate in Rockville Science Day (4/26/09) and Rockville's Hometown Holidays (5/29/09). The booths will likely be the same. Discussion of possible information and demonstrations included:

- A rain barrel demonstration (City staff to provide)
- A recycling bin with Rockville recyclables
- Electrical lights and meters (incandescent v CFL bulbs)
- Factsheets on proper disposal of CFLs
- A banner for the table
- City staff to provide a three-panel display board for pictures and Commission info
- CFL bulbs as give-away items
- A volunteer sign up sheet (Commission, Committees, Volunteer Monitoring, etc.)
- T-shirts for the people working the booth

Three shifts were identified:

11:00 – 1:30 – Davidson-McCord, Dighe & Klareich

1:30 – 3:30 - Odunlami & Kravitz

3:30 – 5:00 - Davis & Lorang-Leins

A question was asked re whether Nate Wall is planning on attending the Rockville Science Day and whether he will help man the booth. Charles will inquire.

A question was asked whether the group thought it should sponsor an energy fair in the fall, possibly in concert with the annual chili cookoff. There will be further discussion of this at a future Commission meeting.

Watershed Committee Report

Kris reported on the *Save our Streams* volunteer monitoring program. Approximately 60 residents have signed up for the two training sessions in March, and the monitoring will occur in **April (19th or 26th)** at a location on Watts Branch. Two additional training sessions will be scheduled for June. Promotion for the program needs to be placed on the web, Rockville Reports, the Gazette, and in the schools. A question was asked about providing certificates to participants. Kris will consider and make a recommendation.

Heather Gewandter is revising the procedures manual and habitat assessment protocol per the comments she received.

The next Committee meeting is **March 19, 2009 at 7 pm (Third Thursday of each month at 30 Courthouse Square).**

Energy/Climate Change Committee

It was suggested that the name of the Committee be changed from High Performance Buildings to the Energy & Climate Change Committee to reflect its larger scope of issues. The Commission will decide this at its next meeting.

Charles led a detailed discussion of the process the City staff expects to use to vet a draft green building ordinance with the Commission and the interested public.

There was a brief discussion of Montgomery Counties proposed HELP (Home Energy Loan Program) program.

The next meeting of the Committee is **March 24, 2009 at 7 pm (Fourth Tuesday of the month at City Hall).**

Outreach Committee

The Committee was tasked with drafting a factsheet on proper CFL disposal in time for use at Rockville Science Day.

Seth and the Committee members are charged with requesting donations or discounts on CFL bulbs or similar items that can be used as future give-away items.

The Committee should be involved in promoting the Commission's participation in Science Day and Hometown Holidays.

The Committee should also promote the *Save our Streams* volunteer monitoring program being organized by the Watershed Committee.

The next meeting of the Committee is **March 25, 2009 at 7 pm (Fourth Wednesday of the month at City Hall).**

Other Old Business

Anti-Graffiti Ordinance

Kris Dighe plans on meeting with the Recreation Committee on March 26, 2009 at the Swim Center.

New Business

Earth Hour

This is a coordinated effort to shut off (residential and office) electricity for one hour. The event is scheduled for March 28, 2009. The Commission felt there was insufficient time to promote the event properly, but expressed interest in pursuing it next spring (2010).

Adjournment

The Commission meeting adjourned at approximately 9:42 pm.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 14, 2009** at **7:30** pm at the **Glenview Mansion in Civic Center Park** (603 Edmonston Drive)

Post-Meeting Action Items:

- In preparation for Rockville Science Day on April 26, the following assignments were made:
 - Creation of a rain barrel demonstration (City staff)
 - A recycling bin with Rockville recyclables (City staff)
 - Electrical lights and meters (incandescent v CFL bulbs) [Equipment is currently stored with City staff – to bring to next Commission meeting]
 - Create a factsheet on proper disposal of CFLs (Outreach Committee)
 - Create a banner for the table/booth (Outreach Committee & City Graphics or Kinkos)
 - City staff to provide a three-panel display board for pictures and Commission info (Charles will bring to next meeting)
 - Pursue or purchase CFL bulbs as give-away items (Outreach Committee)
 - Create a volunteer sign up sheet for the Commission, Committees, Volunteer Monitoring, etc. (Outreach Committee)
 - Investigate t-shirts for the people working the booth (unassigned to date)
- The following commitments were made to staff the Commission booth:
 - 11:00 – 1:30 – Davidson-McCord, Dighe & Klareich
 - 1:30 – 3:30 - Odunlami & Kravitz
 - 3:30 – 5:00 - Davis & Lorang-Leins
- Charles will inquire re Nate Walls' availability to help staff the Commission booth
- Dighe will recommend whether to provide a certificate to participants in the volunteer monitoring training.
- Decide whether to rename the High Performance Building Committee at the next meeting
- Dighe to meet with Recreation Committee re a graffiti ordinance March 26.